

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 126
INFO AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 8351

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (ADDRESSEE ADDED)

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, PORS, IR
SUBJ: RELIGIOUS LEADERS DEMANDS

REF: (A) TEHRAN 8191; B) TEHRAN 8299
C) TEHRAN 7890 (NOTAL)

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SUMMARY: MASHAD AYATOLLAH GIVES RELIGIOUS LEADERS' DEMANDS
ON NEW GOVERNMENT. LIST CALLS FOR FREEDOM OF CLERGY,
HARMONIZATION OF ALL LAWS WITH TENETS OF ISLAM, END TO
EXILE FOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS, AND ALL CABINET MINISTERS
TO BE MOSLEMS WITH DISMISSAL OF BAHAIS FROM GOVERNMENT
SERVICE. AYATOLLAH SHARIATMADARI AND OTHERS MAKE SIMILAR
COMMENTS. EXILED CLERGY HAVE BEGUN TO RETURN TO THEIR
HOMES. DESPITE GOI MEASURES TO DATE, CLERGY HAVE HUNG
BACK FROM MORE FULSOME EMBRACE OF NEW GOI. END SUMMARY.

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1. PRESS MORNING AUGUST 31 FEATURED STATEMENT OF RELI-
GIOUS DEMANDS ON NEW GOI BY MASHAD AYATOLLAH HAJ SEYED
ABDOLLAH SHIRAZI. HE SAID THESE CONSTITUTED WHAT
RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY EXPECTS OF NEW GOI TO SEAL "NATIONAL
RECONCILIATION," AND ADDED DEMANDS HAD ALREADY BEEN
RELAYED TO GOI.

2. RELIGIOUS DEMANDS INCLUDE GUARANTEE OF CLERGY'S "FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND FUNCTION;" ABOLITION OF ALL LAWS VIOLATING PRECEPTS OF KORAN; CLOSING DOWN OF "IMMORAL ESTABLISHMENTS;" FREEING OF POLITICAL PRISONERS; ALLOWING EXILED CLERGYMEN SUCH AS AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI TO RETURN TO IRAN; DISMISSAL OF ALL BAHAIS FROM GOVERNMENT SERVICE; INSURING THAT ALL CABINET MINISTERS ARE SHIITE MOSLEMS; AND COORDINATION OF CULTURAL POLICIES WITH "ISLAMIC TENETS."

3. AYATOLLAH SHARIATMADARI OF QOM, IN FOLLOW-UP TO EARLIER SIMILAR COMMENTS(REF B) STATED AUGUST 30 THAT MOSLEM CLERGY WERE NOT RELIGIOUS FANATICS AND "ADHERED TO PROGRESSIVE PRINCIPLES." HE CATEGORICALLY DENIED ACCUSATIONS THAT HE FAVORED BURNING MOVIE HOUSES, BUT SAID "WE ARE OPPOSED TO MOVIES WHICH DAMAGE ISLAMIC MORAL AND SPIRITUAL LAWS." SHARIATMADARI ALSO DENIED DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN HIMSELF AND KHOMEINI, SAYING A FRIENDLY CONTACT ALWAYS EXISTED BETWEEN THE RELIGIOUS CENTERS AT QOM AND NAJAF (IN IRAQ).

4. PRESS ALSO REPORTS SOME EXILED CLERGYMEN ARE RETURNING HOME, INCLUDING KHOMEINI'S BROTHER HOJJATOLISLAM MORTEZA PASANDIDEH, WHO HAD BEEN ARRESTED TWO MONTHS AGO. IT ALSO NOTES THAT CLERGY HAVE "SHOWN EXTREME RELUCTANCE TO REACT POSITIVELY TO THE GOVERNMENT'S OVER-CONFIDENTIAL

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TURES AND APPEARS TO BE WAITING FOR MORE PROOF FROM THE GOVERNMENT THAT IT WILL ENACT ITS PROMISES."
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5. COMMENT: EMBASSY WOULD AGREE THAT CLERGY HAVE BEEN SLOW TO REACT POSITIVELY, BUT HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THEIR TIES WITH GOI WOULD NOT ENCOURAGE OPTIMISM UNDER BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES. DENIAL OF NAJAF-QOM CONFLICT IS PATENT NONSENSE, BUT CLERGY ON BOTH SIDES SITLL TRYING TO SMOOTH OVER DIFFERENCES. COMPETITION AMOUNG LOCAL RELIGIOUS LEADERS (REF C) IS NOT CONDUCIVE TO COOPERATIVE POSTURE WITH GOI. REACTIONS TO RELIGIOUS ATTITUDED EXPRESSED TO DATE (REFS B, D AND PRESENT TEL) HAVE RANGED FROM APPROVAL BY MANY MOSLEMS TO OUTRIGHT HORROR AMOUNG MANY MODERNISTS WHO BEGIN TO FEAR ACCOMMODATION WITH CLERGY "MEANS TURNING THE CALENDAR BACK 1400 YEARS." SO FAR MAJORITY ATTITUDE IS "WAIT AND SEE," SINCE MORE PERCEPTIVE MODERNISTS REALIZE RHETORIC IS NOT ACTION. MANY IN POLITICAL ELITE, HOWEVER, ARE BEGINNING TO FEEL SHAH AND GOI, HAVING DECISIVELY SOLVED PROBLEM OF "THOSE PRIESTS" IN 1963 HAVE SIMPLY OPENED DORR TO TO RETURN OF "SAME OLD TROUBLES." VARIATION IN MOOD

REFLECTS GENERAL UNCERTAINTY AS WELL AS VIRTUALLY
UNIVERSAL PERCEPTION THAT RELIGIOUS FORCES ARE "BACK
IN THE BALL GAME," FOR GOOD OR ILL.
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